

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 110979

NODIS

FOL REPEAT BEIRUT 4060 ACTION SECSTATE 6 MAY.

QUOTE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 4060

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE

1. MET WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE MORNING OF MAY 6TH. HIS
ADVISER LUCIEN DAHDAH WAS PRESENT.

2. REPORTED TO FRANGIE ON MY MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT
AND CONVEYED TO HIM THE PRESIDENT'S INTEREST IN
LEBANON. POINTED OUT THE PRESIDENT HAD ALREADY GIVEN
HIS APPROVAL TO A MEASURE AIMED AT PROVIDING 20 MILLION
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DOLLARS AS AN INITIAL CONTRIBUTION OF AID FOR LEBANON.

3. FRANGIE, LIKE OTHER LEBANESE OFFICIALS WITH WHOM I SPOKE, WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT I HAD NOT RETURNED WITH SOME SORT OF CLEAR-CUT PLAN THAT WOULD SOLVE ALL HIS COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. HE THEN RAISED THE QUESTION OF A CONSORTIUM FOR LEBANON IN WHICH SYRIA WOULD PARTICIPATE AND BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY MATTERS. THE SYRIANS HAD INFORMED HIM, HE SAID, THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO FULFILL THIS ROLE. THEY WERE DESIROUS, HOWEVER, OF RECEIVING SOME SORT OF INDICATION FROM THE UNITED STATES THAT THE U.S. CONCURRED IN THIS ROLE.

4. I POINTED OUT TO FRANGIE THAT WE WERE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY AND APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE THE IDEA OF A CONSORTIUM. WITH RESPECT TO THE SYRIAN ROLE IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY, HOWEVER, THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT COULD ONLY BE DECIDED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE VIEWS OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES SUCH AS ISRAEL AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS THE PARTIES WITHIN LEBANON.

5. GENERALLY SPEAKING, FRANGIE LIMITED HIS REMARKS TO SECURITY. HE INSISTED ON THE FACT THAT SECURITY WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE AND THAT HE DID NOT SEE HOW THIS COULD BE PROVIDED WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SYRIANS. THE ROLE THE PALESTINIANS COULD PLAY IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY WAS HIGHLY DUBIOUS. IN THE PAST THE PALESTINIANS HAD BEEN THE AGGRESSORS AND THERE WERE NO ASSURANCES THAT THEY WOULD NOT ASSUME THIS ROLE AGAIN. LIBYA AND IRAQ WERE CONSTANTLY CAUSING TROUBLE. UNLESS THE UNITED STATES WITHDREW ITS OBJECTIONS TO SYRIAN INTERVENTION, THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS PARTITION.

6. I REITERATED TO FRANGIE THE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION WITHIN CONTEXT OF POSSIBLE ISRAELI REACTION AND I REVIEWED THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST PARTITION.

7. THE MEETING ENDED WITH THE ARRIVAL OF CHAMOUN, GEMAYEL
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AND FATHER KASSIS. IT WAS EVIDENT BY THAT TIME THAT FRANGIE WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT THE U.S. POSITION DID NOT CALL FOR ADEQUATE SECURITY MEASURES FOR HIS COUNTRY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, IN HIS OPINION, PREVENTED SYRIA FROM PROVIDING THIS.

8. COMMENT: FRANGIE LIKE OTHER OLD-TIME MARONITE LEADERS WANTS A MAGIC SOLUTION. THEY WANT THE U.S. TO

IMPOSE IT AND CANNOT RECONCILE THEMSELVES TO THE FACT
THAT 1976 IS NOT REPEAT NOT 1958. THEY HAVE SOMEHOW
CONVINCED THEMSELVES THAT OUR CONCERN THAT THEY REMAIN STRONG
IN ORDER TO NEGOTIATE TRANSLATES, OR CAN BE MADE TO
TRANSLATE, INTO IRONCLAD GUARANTEES FOR THEIR FUTURE.
THUS, NO DETAILED PROGRAM ELABORATELY SPELLED OUT, EVEN
BEFORE THERE IS ANY SORT OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WITH
WHOM WE MIGHT WORK, IS A GRAVE DISAPPOINTMENT TO THEM.
IT COULD BE, AS WELL, IN INCENTIVE TO THEM TO DO THE
BEST POSSIBLE UNDER THE EXISTING POLITICAL SYSTEM
AND NOT REPEATNOT COUNT ON THAT MAGIC.
BROWN

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